



METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION
225 Polk Avenue, Ben West Library
June 17, 2015

Application: Historic Landmark Overlay for Ben West Library

Map and Parcel Numbers: 09305200100

Council Districts: 19

Applicant: Metro Parks and Recreation Department

Project Lead: Robin Zeigler, robin.zeigler@nashville.gov, 615-862-7970

Description of Project: Mayor Karl Dean is requesting that the Ben West Library be adopted as a Historic Landmark Overlay.

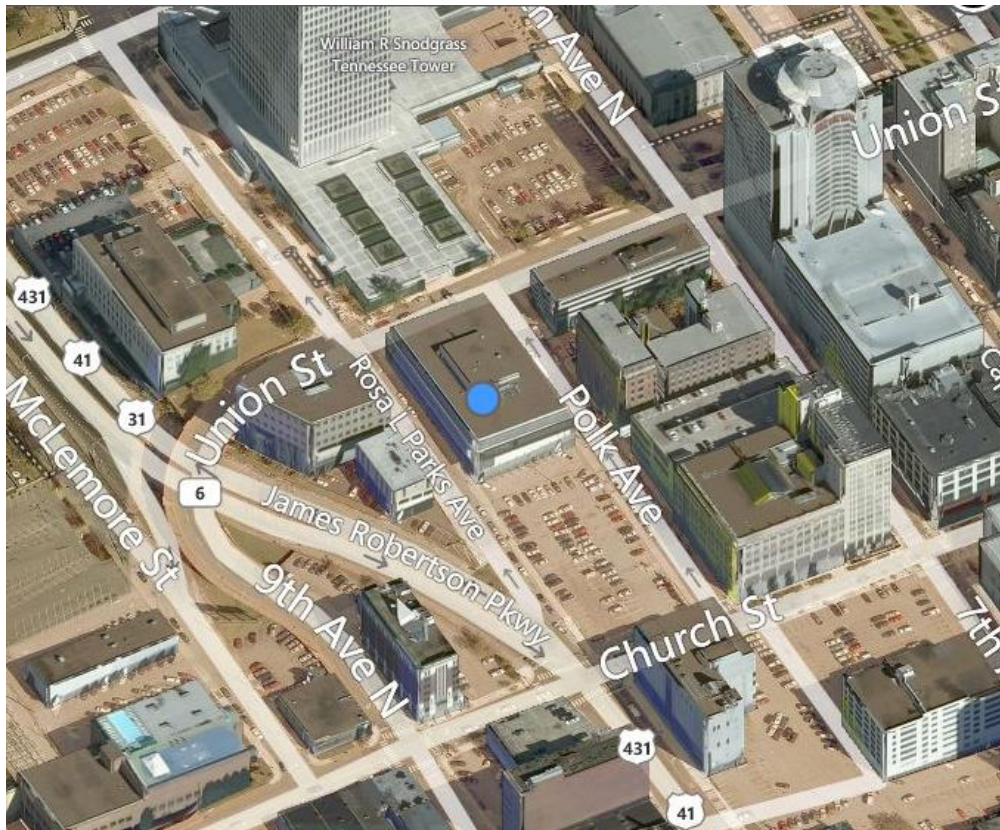
Recommendation Summary: Staff suggests the Commission recommend to City Council that the Ben West Library be adopted as Historic Landmark Overlay. The site meets the standards of the Ordinance for a Historic Preservation Landmark Overlay and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Attachments
A: Photographs

Vicinity Map



Aerial Map



Background:



Vintage postcard shows the library when it was new with a plaza area that is now a parking lot.

In 1965, the New Main Public Library opened on Eighth and Union and was designated the Public Library of Nashville & Davidson County with its formal dedication in January, 1966. This library was designated as the Ben West Library in 1977.

The Ben West Library was design by Bruce I. Crabtree, Jr. of Taylor and Crabtree as a modernist take on the columnar style of the Athens of the South.

It was unique for libraries of its time because it not only served as storage for books but it design also considered the user with large windows and cozy reading spaces. Crabtree is known for designing the James K. Polk and Andrew Jackson state office buildings, the Murphy Center for athletics at Middle Tennessee State University, the Tennessee Performing Arts Center and churches, schools and libraries across the state.

Applicable Ordinance:

Article III. Historic Overlay Districts

17.36.120 Historic Districts Defined. B. Historic Landmark. An historic landmark is defined as a building, structure, site or object, its appurtenances and the property it is located on, of high historical, cultural, architectural or archaeological importance; whose demolition or destruction would constitute an irreplaceable loss to the quality and character of Nashville and Davidson County; and that meets one or more of the following criteria:

1. The historic landmark is associated with an event that has made a significant contribution to local, state or national history;
2. It is associated with the lives of persons significant in local, state or national history;
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic value;
4. It has yielded or may be likely to yielded archaeological information important in history or prehistory; or
5. It is listed or is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Analysis and Findings:

The Ben West Library meets standards 3 and 5 as a significant example of modernist library architecture and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Staff suggests the Commission recommend to City Council a Historic Landmark Overlay for The Ben West Library.

PHOTOGRAPHS





Image from *The Tennessean*